

Federal Executive Association Members:

One of the services provided by your Central Arkansas Federal Executive Association (FEA) is the notification about severe inclement weather. The FEA Weather Watch Committee works together to reach a consensus about the work status for federal employees during inclement weather. It is essential that federal agencies in the metropolitan area comply with this area-wide plan and the announced decisions on dismissal or closure. Agencies should avoid independent action, because any change in the work hours of federal workers in the area requires coordination with municipal and regional officials to minimize disruption of the highway and transit systems.

Agencies that find it necessary to exclude certain offices or activities from this plan should notify the FEA of such exemptions and update such notices when necessary. Application of this guidance must be consistent with the provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements or other controlling policies, authorities, and instructions

Federal Executive Association Actions

1. In the Central Arkansas area, the FEA is the Federal Government's point of contact with municipal governments and regional organizations, such as the Central Arkansas Transportation Association (CATA). FEA Weather Watch Committee members will consult with appropriate municipal and regional officials before making a decision on closure, dismissal, or special leave treatment, and will brief the President of the FEA on highway, transit, and emergency conditions.
2. The Weather Watch Committee the committee includes the following members and agencies: Federal Executive Association President, Federal Executive Association Past President, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Corps of Engineers, General Service Administration, U.S. Marshal Service, Postal Service, Federal Highway Administration, Housing and Urban Development, Social Security Administration, National Weather Service, and Internal Revenue Service. The committee is dispersed as much as possible across the Central Arkansas area. The FEA President will appoint the chair of the Weather Watch Committee.
3. For inclement weather before business hours, the Weather Watch Committee will be charged to assess weather conditions around their communities between 4:30 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. A teleconference will be held at 5:00 a.m. and consensus reached on how the federal government will operate that day. Agencies are asked to carry out the recommendations of the committee. Kriss Hinebaugh, Federal Executive Association Weather Watch Committee Chairman, or designee will be responsible for initiating the teleconferences. For inclement weather during business hours, the time of the teleconference will be communicated by email or telephone. The call-in phone number is the same for both teleconferences.
4. The Weather Watch Committee will reach consensus and will make the decision on whether to curtail Federal operations. This decision is based on the safety of Federal employees and the need to keep Federal operations functioning as normally as possible. The decision will be placed on a voice message system where employees can determine status of federal agencies during

inclement weather. Agencies are asked to carry out the recommendations of the committee. Employees may monitor television and/or radio, or call (501) 301-3111 to determine the status of Federal agencies impacted by this policy.

Agency Responsibilities

1. At least annually, agencies should provide written procedures for emergency dismissal or closure to employees working in the Central Arkansas area. The notice should tell employees how they will be notified, and include the text of the media announcements to be used and a detailed explanation of their meaning. The notice also should explain that if an ["unscheduled leave"](#) policy is announced, employees may request to use annual leave, leave without pay, and/or previously earned compensatory time off.
2. At least annually, agencies should identify "emergency" personnel and notify them in writing that they are designated as "emergency employees." The term "emergency employee" is used to designate those employees who must report for work in emergency situations. The notice should include the requirement that emergency employees report for, or remain at work in emergency situations, and an explanation that dismissal or closure announcements do not apply to them unless they are instructed otherwise. If an agency determines that a situation requires non-emergency employees to report for, or remain at work during an emergency, the agency should establish a procedure for notifying them individually.
3. Agencies are responsible for determining closure, dismissal, and leave policies for employees on shift work and alternative work schedules (i.e., flexible or compressed work schedules) and for informing employees of these policies.
4. Occasionally in emergency situations, individual employees may face special family situations (e.g., when employees are expected to report for work on time, but schools open late or are closed). The FEA will not provide the media with an announcement to cover these situations. Agencies should notify employees of procedures to be followed when this occurs, and should be as flexible and understanding as possible in approving leave in these situations.

Emergencies Before the Workday Begins

The FEA Weather Watch Committee will provide one of the following five announcements to the media when an emergency occurs before the workday begins:

Emergency Announcement	What Announcement Means	Additional Guidance
1. "The Federal Government is OPEN ; employees are expected to report for work on time."	Federal agencies will open on time, and employees are expected to report for work as scheduled.	Agencies may grant a reasonable amount of excused absence to employees who are unavoidably delayed in arriving for work. Factors such as distance, availability of transportation, and the success of other employees in similar situations should be considered in determining the amount of excused absence to grant. Employees are responsible for notifying their supervisors of their situation.

Emergency Announcement	What Announcement Means	Additional Guidance
<p>2. "Federal agencies are OPEN under an UNSCHEDULED LEAVE policy; employees may take leave without prior approval."</p>	<p>Federal agencies will open on time, but employees not designated as "emergency employees" or "minimum essential personnel" may take annual leave or leave without pay (LWOP) without the prior approval of their supervisors. Employees designated as "emergency employees" or "minimum essential personnel" are expected to report for work on time.</p>	<p>Employees should inform their supervisors if they plan to take annual leave or LWOP.</p>
<p>3. "Federal agencies are OPEN under a DELAYED ARRIVAL policy. Employees should plan to arrive for work at <u> (time) </u>."</p>	<p>Employees should plan their commutes so that they arrive for work at <u> (time) </u>. Employees who arrive after <u> (time) </u> will be charged annual leave or leave without pay for the additional period of absence from work. Telework employees are expected to report for work on time. Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time. Employees who cannot report for work may request unscheduled leave for their entire scheduled workday.</p>	<p>Agencies may use the guidance in OPM's "Handbook on Alternative Work Schedules" to determine the "normal arrival and departure times" of employees on flexible schedules. The handbook is available on OPM's website at http://www.opm.gov/oca/aws_. Employees must inform their supervisors if they plan to take annual leave or LWOP.</p>

Emergency Announcement	What Announcement Means	Additional Guidance
4. "Federal agencies are CLOSED ."	Employees not designated as "emergency employees" or "minimum essential personnel" are excused from duty without loss of pay or charge to leave. Employees designated as "emergency employees" or "minimum essential personnel" are expected to report for work on time.	Workdays on which a Federal activity is closed are non-workdays for leave purposes. Employees who are on approved leave before the closure must be granted excused absence. This does not apply to employees on LWOP, military leave, suspension, or in a non-pay status. Employees on alternate work schedules (AWS) are not entitled to another AWS day off "in lieu of" the workday on which the agency is closed.

Emergencies During Normal Work Hours

When FEA authorizes an **"early dismissal,"** employees should be dismissed at the time the **"early dismissal"** is announced. For example, an announcement will be made that Federal offices will close at 2 p.m. Employees who leave work earlier than the *early dismissal time* will be charged annual leave or leave without pay from the time of their departure through the remainder of their **regularly scheduled workday**. Employees on pre-approved leave or unscheduled leave for the entire day should be charged leave for the entire day. Emergency employees are expected to remain at work. Telework employees may be expected to continue to work from their telework sites, as specified in their telework agreements.

How is leave handled when an "adjusted work dismissal" is authorized?

Employee Action	Leave Policy
Employee is on duty.	Agency should grant excused absence for the remainder of the workday following the employee's authorized time of dismissal even if the employee is scheduled to take leave later in the day.
Employee leaves before the time set for his or her authorized dismissal (with supervisory approval).	In a situation not involving a hardship, the agency may charge leave for the period remaining before the employee's authorized departure time.
Employee leaves before official word of "early dismissal" is received.	The agency should charge leave or absence without leave, as appropriate, for the remainder of the workday.
Employee is scheduled to return from leave	The agency should charge leave for the

after the announcement of an "early dismissal" policy but before his or her authorized departure time.	period during which the employee is on approved leave and should grant excused absence for the remainder of the workday following the employee's authorized time of dismissal even if the employee is scheduled to take leave later in the day.
Employee is absent on previously approved leave (annual, sick, or leave without pay (LWOP)) for the entire workday.	The agency should continue to charge the employee leave for the entire workday.
Employee fails to report for work before his or her authorized dismissal time.	The agency should charge annual leave, sick leave, or LWOP, as appropriate, for the entire workday. Exceptions to this policy should be made only in unusual circumstances.
Employee is scheduled to report for work after an "early dismissal" policy is officially announced.	The agency may grant excused absence to the employee even if the employee is scheduled to take leave later in the day.

Kriss Hinebaugh
Weather Watch Chairman